



Willow Pass Road Safety Improvements

April 29, 2009

Responses to comments received at the Community Meeting, April 7, 2009

Thank you for showing your interest in the Willow Pass Road Safety Improvements Project. As a result of our Community Meeting held April 7, 2009 at the Ambrose Recreation and Park District Center, we received an overwhelming number of questions and comments. Responses are provided in this document for your information. We are continuing to make modifications to the proposed project and explore alternatives that will be presented at our next community meeting for the project. If you have additional questions or concerns about the project, please contact Angela Villar in the Transportation Engineering Division of the Public Works Department at (925) 313-2016 or avill@pw.cccounty.us.

1. What started this project: the collisions or the allocated money?

Willow Pass Road has a long history of high collision rates that the Public Works Department is aware of. The Proposition 1B funding was allocated based on the high number of collisions and provided the County with the opportunity to make improvements to reduce the number of collisions along Willow Pass Road.

2. Did you take into consideration the widening of Highway 4 which diverts traffic off of Willow Pass Road?

Construction of the Highway 4 widening to 4-lanes between Bailey Road and Railroad Avenue was completed in Fall 2001. Traffic volumes decreased along Willow Pass Road in 2002, but the number of collisions along Willow Pass Road increased to its highest with 87 collisions occurring in 2002.

3. Has a traffic count shown an increase in traffic along Willow Pass Road since the West Leland Road exit was open?

According to the City of Pittsburg, the West Leland Road Extension to San Marco Boulevard was opened to traffic in August 2006. Traffic counts on Willow Pass Road, taken in July 2007 after opening of the West Leland Road Extension, continue to show an increase in traffic along Willow Pass Road.

4. Where did you obtain the collision data from?

Collision data comes from the Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) maintained by the California Highway Patrol (CHP). Collision history data presented at the community meeting was based on an 8-year time period from January 2000 to December 2007.

Collision rates are commonly used to identify locations of safety concerns and are based on the number of collisions over a given time period along a section of roadway that experiences a known average daily traffic (ADT) volume. The 2006 Caltrans statewide



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average collision rate for an urban 4+ lane undivided roadways was 2.48. The collision rate for Willow Pass Road near Bailey Road was 9.09 from 2000-2007. This is over 3.5 times the statewide average.

5. Both fatalities were not caused by cross-over traffic.

One of the fatalities involved a vehicle drifting over the center lane and colliding head on with opposing traffic. A raised median could prevent vehicles from traveling into the opposite direction of travel. The other fatality involved a drunk driver and a pedestrian. While the fatalities were not directly caused by vehicles making left turns, approximately 57% of the collisions in the area between 2000 and 2007 were. The Public Works Department strives to be proactive in implementing safety improvements and not reactive to fatalities that occur.

6. Will this project be approved by the County whether or not the community wants it?

The Contra Costa County Public Works Department values the community's input and intends to make safety improvements along Willow Pass Road with the funding allocated. The initial alternative for the proposed project was presented at the Community Meeting on April 7. With the support of the community, the Public Works Department will continue to develop alternatives and modify the proposed project.

7. What is the cost of the project?

The estimated project costs for the proposed project ranges from \$600,000 to \$800,000 and will vary depending on the type of median chosen for installation.

8. How much of the funding has been spent to date on this project?

Approximately \$50,000 of the funding has been spent on the project to date. The project began in early 2007 and the estimated costs to date include all research and planning in developing the proposed project, along with all community outreach.

9. Why should we change our lifestyle here in our small town – because the freeway is not adequate – people who do not live here drive through Willow Pass Road which makes more traffic, which makes collisions? This plan seems to make it better for commuters but not residents.

Highway 4 is not within the County's jurisdiction. We do not have the ability to change driver behavior to stop drivers from utilizing Willow Pass Road. However, we do have the opportunity to make Willow Pass Road safer for residents and non-residents that utilize Willow Pass Road.

10. Can money be used to widen WP east of Bailey Rd? Can we make Willow Pass Road 4-lanes through to Pittsburg? Can we make Willow Pass Road east of Bailey Road 3-lanes through to Pittsburg with 2-lanes in the eastbound direction and 1-lane in the westbound direction?

Proposition 1B funding has been allocated to Willow Pass Road in Bay Point to provide safety improvements. It can be used anywhere along Willow Pass Road from Highway 4 to

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the Pittsburg City Limits (east of Crivello Avenue). However, the largest concentration of collisions was identified immediately west of the Bailey Road intersection and the Public Works Department wishes to address this safety concern.

Willow Pass Road east of Bailey Road can be reconfigured to provide more through lanes, but it will require removal of on-street parking, including in front of Anuta Park and/or widening of the roadway and acquisition of property from properties fronting Willow Pass Road. It may require the removal of the existing two-way left turn lane and removal of existing turn pockets at intersections.

11. Can we install landscaping for the Willow Pass Road medians?

Proposition 1B established funds for local transportation facilities to increase traffic safety. In order for landscaping to be installed in the proposed median islands, alternative funding would need to be identified for the installation and an assessment district would need to be formed for the maintenance costs.

12. What were the results & conclusions from the surveys sent out & traffic counter data collected?

We received 8 of the 16 business surveys and 2 of the 8 residential surveys sent out. The traffic counter data collected on the Henkel and Criterion driveways indicated that the peak morning and evening hours did not coincide with the peak traffic volumes along Willow Pass Road. Both the surveys and counter data helped us better understand the individual access needs of each property.

13. Did you take into consideration the problem at the Bailey Road/Willow Pass Road intersection where people utilize the southbound right turn lane to go straight through the intersection?

Yes, the proposed project will restripe the eastbound approach to the intersection to allow vehicles in the outside lane to go straight or turn right onto southbound Bailey Road.

14. With the proposed medians, what if multiple cars need to use the left turn pockets and block the through lanes?

Turn pocket lengths will be sized adequately per the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Left turn pockets will be provided with storage for multiple cars if necessary.

15. Will drivers be able to make a left turn out of Sycamore Court?

Unfortunately, drivers will not be able to make a left turn out of Sycamore Court. Sycamore Court is situated only approximately 150 feet west of the Bailey Road intersection and a future left turn pocket at the intersection for the future Walgreens development would prohibit any left turn movements from Sycamore Court.

16. Why was my business singled out to have no left hand turns off of Willow Pass Road?

Due to the close proximity of existing driveways and intersections along Willow Pass Road, it



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is not physically possible to provide left turn pockets to each business. Left turn pockets are based on the minimum lengths required in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The proposed layout shown is preliminary. During the planning process, we tried to take into account the types of businesses along Willow Pass Road and the amount of traffic accessing each property from the survey responses we received.

17. With the proposed medians, where will you be able to make a U-turn?

The AASHTO Geometric Design of Highways and Streets recommends a minimum of 32 feet of clear pavement width for a passenger car to perform a U-turn. Larger vehicles (i.e. SUV's, trucks, buses, etc.) require additional pavement width in order to perform a safe U-turn maneuver. Only approximately 27 feet of pavement width is available along Willow Pass Road, indicating that safe U-turn maneuvers are not possible. Unfortunately, drivers wishing to turn around will need to utilize side streets or modify their driving routes.

18. Most collisions are from Bailey Road to Bill's Ranch Market. Why does the proposed median extend further west?

There are several vacant parcels with frontage on Willow Pass Road west of Bill's Ranch Market that have potential for development. The Public Works Department desires to construct medians in this area to set future precedence and prevent future collisions in this area.

19. Reduce traffic so those of us living here can walk and bike safely in our community. Bike lanes are too narrow.

The proposed project will maintain the existing shoulder widths along Willow Pass Road. The project also will fill existing sidewalk gaps to create continuous sidewalk along both sides of Willow Pass Road and upgrade existing curb ramps to current accessible standards. The County's Traffic Safety Investigator reviewed the existing bike lane widths and found them to be approximately 4.5 feet wide. The Caltrans Highway Design Manual requires a minimum of 5 feet width adjacent to curb and gutter for a Class II bike lane. Due to the inadequate pavement width, the bike lane signs along Willow Pass Road will be replaced with bike route signs.

20. On westbound Willow Pass Road, just west of fire station, there is a 2" below road surface square utility access cover in the bike lane. Will it be brought up to grade as part of this project?

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. We have notified our Maintenance Division of the below grade utility cover and they will be contacting the appropriate utility company to request that it be raised.

21. This proposal will not only impact my business, it will negatively impact the value of my property. What is the economic impact to the businesses?

The goal of this project is to improve the safety of everyone along Willow Pass Road. The proposed project is being constructed entirely within the existing right of way with no property rights or parking from existing businesses being acquired. The proposed project will maintain access to all existing business and homeowners along Willow Pass Road. The

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proposed project is intended to improve safety for the traveling public along Willow Pass Road.

22. What impact does this project have on Fire Department and Sheriff vehicles needing to use the middle lane during heavy traffic times?

The Fire Department, Sheriff, and California Highway Patrol have all been given the opportunity to provide feedback to the proposed project. The Public Works Department acknowledges that the proposed median islands could delay the response time of emergency vehicles, but feels that the improvements would improve safety and reduce the number of collisions in the area.

23. Where is the proposed driveway for Walgreens located?

The proposed driveway for Walgreens is located on the north side of Willow Pass Road at the Bailey Road intersection. They will be required to construct the northern leg of the intersection, add a northbound through lane, add an eastbound left turn lane, and make all other modifications to the existing traffic signal. They will also have additional access on North Broadway Avenue.

24. If the improvements to the intersection are made, do we need the medians?

The proposed medians address our specific safety concern of broadside collisions in and out of the existing two-way left turn lane. The intersection improvements will improve traffic flow through the intersection and reduce back up at the traffic signal.

25. Can we post signage sooner to make sure motorists don't wait until the last minute to cross the Bailey Road intersection?

The Willow Pass Road/Bailey Road intersection is appropriately signed and striped. The County's Traffic Safety Investigator reviewed the existing signage and striping at the intersection. The striped median island in the eastbound right turn only lane will be restriped, but no additional signing or striping at the intersection was recommended at this time.

26. Why not lengthen the red light phase for EB Willow Pass Rd at Bailey Road in order to discourage out of community cut-through commuters?

Lengthening the red light phase for the eastbound approach to the intersection is not desired because it would create longer queues blocking existing driveways. The Public Works Department strives to move traffic safely and efficiently along roadways and through intersections.

27. Can we put in a no right turn on red sign at the eastbound Willow Pass Road approach or northbound Bailey Road approach to the intersection?

The signal at the Willow Pass Road/Bailey Road intersection has already been optimized based on turning traffic volumes. Restricting no right turn on red could cause drivers to cut through corner parking lots or through residential neighborhoods. It would also create longer queue lengths blocking existing driveways.



28. Can we use a coordinated traffic signal at Clearland Drive with Bailey Road and use them together to meter traffic?

A traffic signal is not warranted at Clearland Drive. (Please see the response to Question #30.) Metering would create back up and congestion at signalized intersections. The Public Works Department strives to increase safety and efficiency of traffic flow along our roadways.

29. Can we put in a traffic signal for the fire station?

The Fire Station is located approximately 120 feet west of the Manor Drive signalized intersection. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) recommends that traffic signals be spaced at least 1,000 feet apart. If congestion in front of the Fire Station is a problem, we can stripe "Keep Clear" pavement markings in front of the existing driveway.

30. Why can't we put in a traffic signal at Clearland Drive?

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) identifies eight warrants that should be analyzed when considering installation of a traffic control signal. These warrants take into account factors such as traffic volumes, peak hour volumes, pedestrian volumes, school crossings, collision history, and the road network. Our Traffic Division has analyzed the signal warrants for the Willow Pass Road and Clearland Drive intersection and none of the traffic signal warrants were satisfied.

31. Can we put in flashing warning signs at the industrial driveway?

There already exist numerous traffic lights along Willow Pass Road and adding more lights may be confusing to drivers. The Public Works Department does not install flashing warning signs to individual private driveways.

32. Can we stripe each existing driveway with "Keep Clear" or "Do not block" across Willow Pass Road?

The existing driveways along Willow Pass Road are numerous and closely spaced. "Keep Clear" and "Do not block" pavement markings are only paint and not effective in preventing vehicles from stopping in them. Furthermore, they would only lengthen the queues at the intersection and block other driveways further from the intersection.

33. Can we install cameras at the Bailey Road intersection?

The Public Works Department is not the enforcing agency for traffic violations, nor does the Department have the funds to install and operate a camera enforcement program.

34. Can we install lighted (flashing yellow) crosswalks?

There exists no clear criterion to determine which crosswalks should be lighted. Thus, it is difficult for the Public Works Department to justify installation of lighted crosswalks.

35. Can we allow parking during non-peak hours between North Broadway Avenue and Solano Avenue and only provide parking restrictions during peak hours?

Time restrictive parking can be confusing to drivers and are not desirable on County roads.



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The proposed project will eliminate on-street parking on Willow Pass Road between North Broadway Avenue and Solano Avenue. The proposed restriping of the eastbound merge from 2-lanes down to 1-lane east of North Broadway Avenue does not allow enough pavement width to maintain on-street parking.

36.Can we use funds to install speed humps?

Speed humps can delay the response time for emergency vehicles and are not an appropriate traffic control device for Willow Pass Road.

37.Change speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph.

The speed limit is set based on standards found in the California Vehicle Code, except in residential and school areas where the limit is 25 mph. Willow Pass Road is neither a residential or school area. The vehicle code requires a radar study be performed and the speed limit set at the 85th percentile speed. A speed survey was performed on Willow Pass Road in 2007 and posted speed limit signs are up to date. Lowering a speed limit in hopes of slowing down vehicles does not typically work. Drivers drive at a speed which they feel is comfortable.

